



Minnesota Transportation Museum

MINNEGAZETTE

July/August 1986

Editorials

Disappointments
And Opportunities

Mainline passenger excursions are dead for 1986, and likely for several years to come. It was not hostile railroad managers who did them in, but a deepening insurance crisis that has forced the railroads to protect themselves with radical measures.

This spring, local roads initiated an industry self-insurance pool to escape the crushing cost of commercial liability protection. This forced a drastic increase in liability deductibles, the amount carriers must pay toward a claim from their own pockets before insurance kicks in, from \$3 million only two years ago to a whopping \$25 million now. With tourist railway liability coverage falling to only \$1 million later this year and without a competitive insurance market, museums clearly have no place at the poker table.

The **Burlington Northern Railroad**, being well versed in the cold world of railroading for profit and one of MTM's chief benefactors, foresaw that circumstances could quickly squelch the joy of highballing under coal smoke. In 1983 they provided MTM with a golden parachute in the form of the Stillwater branch.

Not long ago, MTM was chasing after every abandoned branchline within a 60 mile radius without a whisper of success. Today we own the Stillwater branch free and clear, only a half hour drive from the Twin Cities in the heart of the St Croix Valley tourist area. No, 328 will not smoke up anyone's mainline for a while, and yes, we are limited to trolleys at Lake Harriet and trains at Stillwater. What indeed is wrong with that?

Calendar Of Events

The dates and locations of membership meetings have been finalized for 1986. Please note them in your calendar. Other events still are being scheduled. Events and their dates can change, so please watch this column.

Aug 16: MTM Picnic, Locke Park, Fridley.

Sept 23: Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., National Guard Auditorium, Fort Snelling.

Nov 25: Annual Membership Meeting & Election of 1987 Officers, 7:30 p.m., Northwestern Life Insurance building, 20 Washington Ave., Minneapolis.

We can build Stillwater into an exhibit commensurate with our talents. It needs a storage building and lots more track work. For the present at least we must share access to downtown with Burlington Northern, and we have no real idea about the site's on-going capacity to earn revenue. But it took 15 years to build the Lake Harriet Trolley into a permanent exhibit. There is no reason to think Stillwater will be different. Like the HO layout in the basement, hobby railroads never are quite finished, but what fun they are in the making.

“Sorry It’s Late, But . . . ”

or “A Funny Thing Happened On My Way To The Printer”

The season has been than glorious at mid-summer. In late May, your Editor offered to lead the new Stillwater operating division of MTM, proposed by **Don Westley's** By-Laws Committee. I stipulated that a new editor should be found for the **Minnegazette**, since I cannot do both jobs. The Board accepted, and I set about trying to organize weekly operations at the site.

Not much came together. A new editor has not been found, and as of late July, no regular operation for Stillwater is in sight. The story goes like this:

The Railroad Division saved nothing from its 1985 summer revenues to pay for equipment repairs last winter. As a result, work languished on engine 328 and the doodlebug, and incidentally, so did member morale. A sizeable share of the 1986 membership dues went to the Division in January, but did not begin to cover restoration costs for the two pieces. Money from loans and grants was found in the spring, and in April crash programs began on 328 and the

doodlebug. Completion deadlines were set for May, then June, then July, and now August. The two pieces optimistically might be done near the end of the summer operating season. Naturally this means the Division will begin another winter short of cash.

The usual 15-20 members showed up at the Roundhouse on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays until this spring. With little being accomplished and MTM out of the mainline excursion business, attendance began to evaporate. By July, a handful were attending work sessions, further slowing progress. And as always, mechanical problems multiplied well beyond initial estimates.

Leasing a diesel locomotive for Stillwater assumes cost and risk which MTM cannot now support. In May, **Art Pew** offered his “**Unimag**” vehicle to pull an outfitted flatcar, as a stop-gap measure to gain revenue and public exposure. A successful test was run, but at its July meeting the Board narrowly turned down using either the Unimag or **Dan Patch No 100** at Stillwater. A committee was appointed to consider sending Dan Patch if secure storage can be provided at the site. The committee also suggested offering public rides on MTM's speeder car pulling outfitted work trailers.

About The Cover

Just before the insurance crisis dropped the fires on mainline steam action, **Chicago & North Western** did itself proud by sending **Ten Wheeler 1385** to the Twin Cities to entertain employees and fans. **Bob Ball**, taker of epic CNW action shots, caught the R-1 leading the special out of town at St Anthony Tower, St Paul, on May 18, 1986. **Mid-Continent Railway Museum**, North Freedom, WI, owns the engine and consist of tool car and ex-CNW office car.



Published bi-monthly for members in good standing of the Minnesota Transportation Museum, Inc.

Articles and photos of museum interest are always welcome and will be returned upon request.

Please address all communications to the editor,

**Bill Graham, Minnegazette
5818 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419**

The Dan Patch surely risks vandalism at Stillwater, the same as someone else's diesel, and of course no one knows how it will perform on our hill until we try it. There are no available storage buildings at or near the site, and a fence provides dubious protection. Outfitting two speeder flats will take time and money, and with a dozen seats, the operation would be a gesture at best. Speeder flats, of course, have no brakes.

The summer days are passing. None of us are crazy about our choices, but is that reason to avoid making them? The Unimag was the best available, beating Dan Patch by a nose. However, the Board chose not decide the question in time to take full advantage of this season.

Excuses? Yes. Answers? No. Minnegazette? Late. Sorry.

What, Then?

Some modest storage buildings are the immediate need at Stillwater. Finding the money for them challenges MTM's credibility as an organization. Most of it must come as grants and loans. As with **Jackson Street Roundhouse**, however, grants and loans come only after we prove our ability to earn money on our own, while providing a service valuable to the community. Therefore, regular public operation at Stillwater should have been our first critical objective starting at least a year ago.

It is not time to throw in the towel, and of course, 1987 is another year when we will have another shot at it. But we have owned the site for three years, and still have no coherent agreement for utilizing it. Many are wondering how long it will take to have that, not the least of whom are St Croix Valley residents who watch us struggle to fix track that rarely sees a train.

Is There A Future?

Probably, but MTM must get its internal act together to make 1987 better than 1986. That means setting clear objectives this fall, and pursuing them like bull dogs throughout the winter. It means placing people in charge who can make sensible decisions, manage and represent the Museum as a whole. Without mainline excursions, the old Railroad Division needs either to be dissolved or assigned a new mission.

At the July Board meeting, reference

was made to "deck chairs on the Titanic," a comment not too far from the mark. The water is cold. It's time for MTM to keep the wireless open and steer south. By the way, who wants to be **Minnegazette** Editor?

Bill Graham
Acting Editor

President's Message

Half way through the 1986 operating season, the **Como-Harriet Streetcar Line** is having one of its best years yet. Train ridership at **Stillwater Lumberjack Days**, July 19-20, was way up. Each of us had a chance to try on our vintage uniforms and do our own thing. With the insurance situation as it is, Lumberjack Days probably will be our train's last big splash this year. One way or another, however, MTM hopes to run something at Stillwater on weekends this summer.

Our biggest problem is motive power. It looks as if engine 328 will be ready in a few weeks, if enough members get out to give the roundhouse group a big hand. There is a good chance of getting a few charters for 328 this summer.

The Museum has the strong potential to lease the **Jackson Street Roundhouse** to help raise funds needed to keep it going. There still is time for members to pledge who have not gotten around to it. The fund surely can use your help!

In the next 60 days, the **Nominating Committee** will be making up its list of candidates for 1987 Museum officers. Please think about this seriously, and volunteer if you can. Interested members should contact the committee who are **Pat Campion, Zeke Fields and Don Westley**.

The future of the Museum and our hobby rests on your doing your part. Keep up the good work to help MTM have the best season possible.

Gene Corbey
President



MTM President Gene Corbey with Andersen Corp NW2 switcher (ex-Norfolk & Western), Lumberjack Days, Stillwater, July 20 1986.

Minnegazette Calendar

Please send photos and articles for the September/October **Minnegazette** to the Acting Editor by September 5, 1986. Please also note dates, times and places of membership meetings published in the **Calendar Of Events**.



Mid-Continent Railway Museum's Ten Wheeler No 1385 rides North Western's table at East Minneapolis engine terminal, May 18, 1986. Chicago & North Western leases engine, formerly on its roster, from Mid-Continent Railway Museum for excursion and public relations service. Bob Ball Photo.

Membership Report

With reduced membership activity this summer, I have been answering numerous requests for information on future train trips. All have been answered with an appropriate form letter and a Como-Harriet brochure.

Our foreign coverage has expanded with a membership established in Christchurch, New Zealand, and already includes members in Australia, Norway and Canada.

The September **Minnegazette** will include a membership directory supplement showing new members and address changes. The Post Office does not automatically forward mail under our

Third Class mailing permit, causing members' mail to go astray if our address records are incorrect. So far, 59 members have paid the \$5 annual charge for First Class mailing service. Be sure to notify me when your address or phone number changes.

Our current membership is as follows:

Category	Metro	Total
Associate	137	212
Active	269	328
Family	209	264
Corporate	1	1
Total	671	830

Raymond R Bensen Sr
Membership Secretary

MTM Receives O'Neal Foundation Grant

The O'Neal Foundation has awarded the Museum a grant of \$20,000 to be used for restoration of historic rail equipment. The money primarily will be used to complete engine 328 repairs and provide a new roof for the office car "Gopher." Thanks to the Foundation for providing the money, and to Ken Snyder for arranging the grant.





CNW Historical Society and railroad employees saw rare North Western power at Minneapolis Junction on May 17, 1986. Mid-Continent Museum Ten Wheeler highlights "Presidential F" 401 and SD 6644. Bob Ball Photo.



North Western inspection train basks in flash bulbs at Western Avenue yard, St Paul, May, 1986. Bob Ball Photo.

Counties Move To Protect Two Harbors Line

The **Boards of St Louis and Lake Counties** jointly formed a regional railroad authority in July, empowered under a 1983 statute to preserve and improve rail service on lines threatened by abandonment. The new authority is studying prospects for tourist rail operations throughout the North Shore and Iron Range areas. Of particular interest is the inactive Missabe line between Duluth and Two Harbors, which owner **US Steel** plans to dismantle after September 1, 1986.

The **Lake Superior Museum** proposes regular excursions over the line if a public agency can arrange to purchase it. The Authority delayed considering a property tax levy needed to buy the line pending findings of the feasibility study.

Traction Report

Gene Hickey has resigned as vice president of the Traction Division. Gene is recovering from surgery this spring, and is concerned at the Museum's inability to obtain directors' liability insurance. He plans to remain active in Museum activities. **Mike Buck** has been appointed Vice President - Traction until the November election.

Car 1300 was out of service during July for repairs to its brake rigging. When it is back on the line, the floor of Car 265 will be cleaned and revarnished. Maintenance of way gangs have concentrated on tie replacements and servicing rail joints. "ETS 1," the new electric speeder, has performed excellently. It now mounts a horn in addition to the ding-dong bell which was too polite for some bystanders.

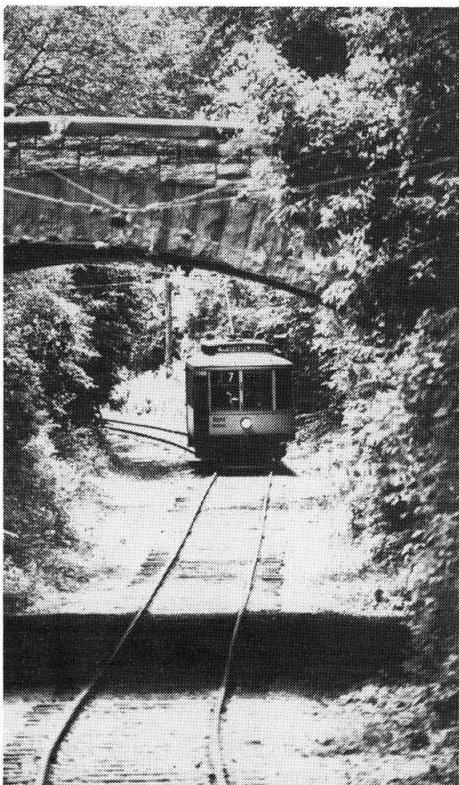
Seasonal ridership totalled 21,862 on July 15, about five percent ahead of 1985. The new Lake Harriet bandstand has attracted many first-time riders. Three consecutive Sundays carried over 1,000 passengers, and standees have been common on late evening trips.

Work is progressing quickly on Car 78 under direction of **Keith Anderson**. **Bob Dumas** is directing the rebuilding of the

car's frame. The sides and underframe are nearly finished, and work is concentrating on the roof framing. The platforms will be hung from the body, and the motor truck will be cleaned and painted later this summer.

Bob has taught several new tricks for preserving and re-using the original framing. Broken sections have been put right using epoxy glue and screws. Where sections are missing altogether, Bob has rejoined the original members using new oak material. The old frame wobbles a little less with each fix. Materials are being chosen to enclose the sides and roof before cold weather returns. By next spring, No 78 will be sound as an 1893 dollar, and look more like the charming trolley car it once was.

Preservation specialists argue whether a restoration as old as No 78 amounts to a new replica or a true restoration of the original car. Had the car remained in service continuously to now, most of it today would consist of replacement materials. Our work will keep at least two-thirds of the original frame and well over half the interior woodwork with the rebuilt car, and new material will be fashioned to replicate original pieces exactly. Thus, it is safe to say that Car 78 will qualify as a restoration.



Northbound Car 265 nears Berry Bridge in July, 1986.



Dyslectic destination sign reads "Selby-Lake" in 1940, when Twin City Federal was offering three percent interest on savings. Twin City Lines Car 1207 is at the east end of the Lake Street Bridge preparing to climb Marshall Avenue Hill in St Paul. Frost shields helped motorman see ahead during winter months. M Tjornhom Photo Courtesy of Gene Hickey.

Harriet Pavilion Opens

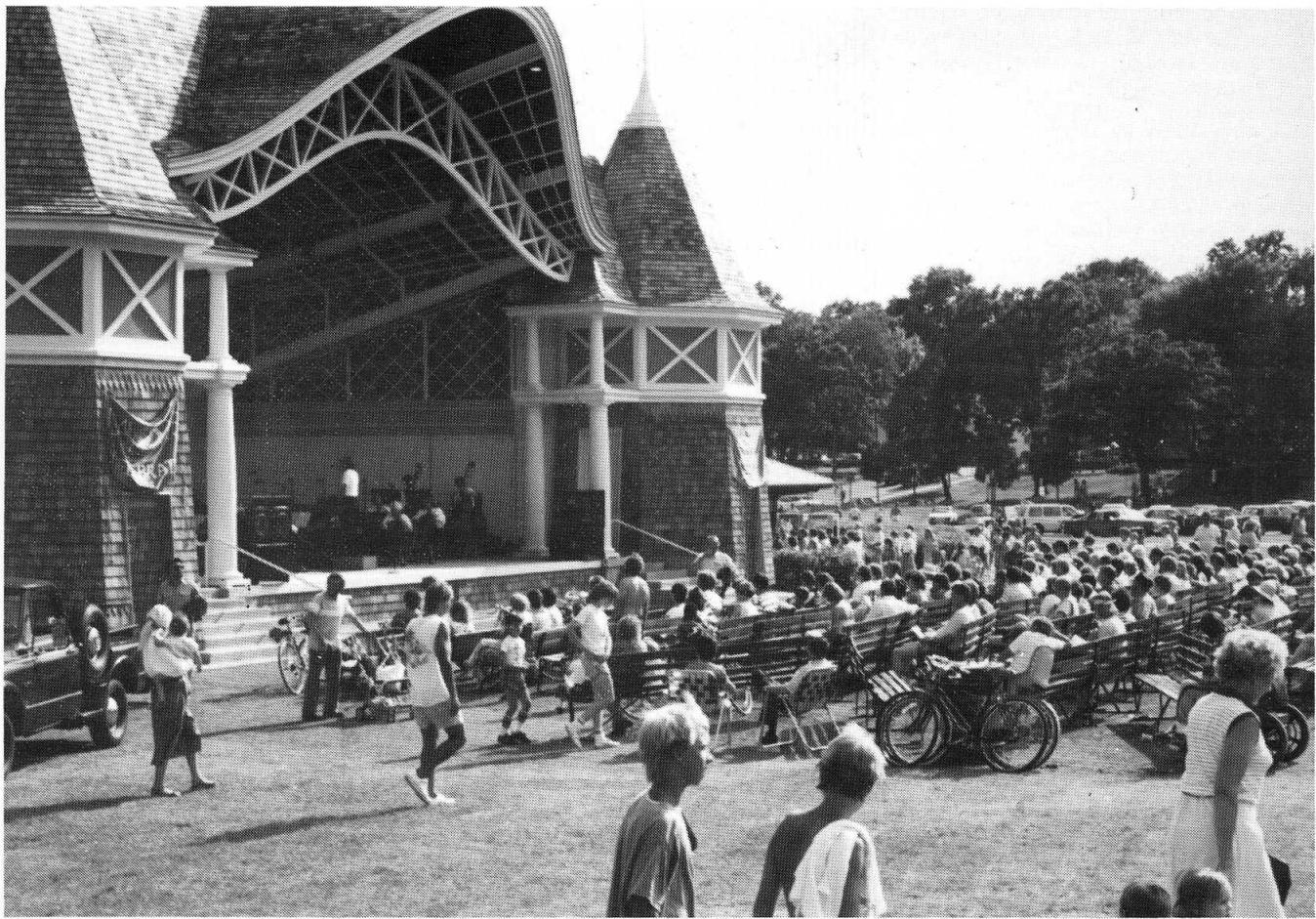
Bandstand Wowed 'Em

- Bill Graham

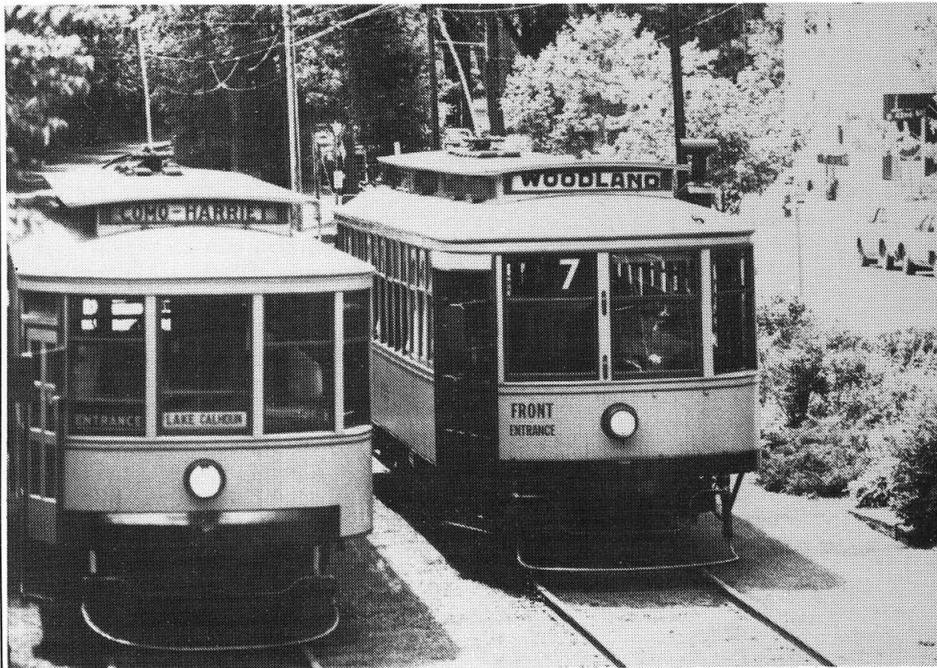
Crowds of Twin Citians saluted Lake Harriet's new orchestra pavilion at a gala inauguration in Minneapolis June 29. A blue ribbon stretched 2.9 miles around the lake was clipped at 2 p.m. by members of the **Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board** and **Governor Rudy Perpich**. Helium balloons ascended as speakers recounted the century of open air music at the lake. **Philip Brunell** lead the **Minneapolis Pops Orchestra**

in "Gaudeamus Igitur" to officially christen the new band shell.

With the temperature in the 70's, host **Arnold Walker** made the concert a family affair as he has for many years, and Brunell directed selections by Brahms, Strauss and Ilgar. The orchestra premiered an original work in five movements entitled "Lake Harriet Suite," written by local composers and sponsored by the **Northwest Area Foundation**. The concert ended with a Tschaikowski concerto.



Minneapolis Pops Orchestra makes a little Lake Harriet magic. Car 265 boards passengers far right, July, 1986.



Duluth 265 (right) passes Twin City 1300 on 42nd Street siding. Photographer Aaron Isaacs says June 29 festivity resembled a 1910 operation recorded in MTC files when streetcars hauled 10,000 to Svenskarnasdag at Minnehaha Falls.

Sound from the new facility is like nothing ever heard at the lake. Older members of the audience said the new pavilion is every bit as good as the one of 1904. The crowd overflowed the benches and sprawled on the grass well up into the picnic glen. White pennants fluttered from the spires of the new pavilion, and the music spoke to a fondness thousands feel for a lake and a place they hold as their own.

Streetcars Hauled 'Em

- Fred Rhodes

The Museum's streetcars have shuttled joyriders down the century old right of way between Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun for the past 16 years. They have done the job well, as 700,000 riders can attest.

On June 29, the line entered a new era, providing functional service to hundreds of passengers from remote parking areas at Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet for the new bandstand dedication and all day concerts. Concert goers

returned to Lake Calhoun by streetcar later in the day, just as in the good old days. The day's end total was a smashing 1,719 passengers!

The new (fifth) bandstand resulted in much new landscaping around the area. For the grand opening only, the entire area was closed to auto traffic, including 42nd Street crossing our tracks. The only way into the bandstand area, said the Minneapolis newspaper, was to park in the neighborhoods and walk in, ride a special shuttle bus, take the MTC Route 6 bus (which stops blocks away or at Lake Calhoun), or ride the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line from Lake Calhoun.

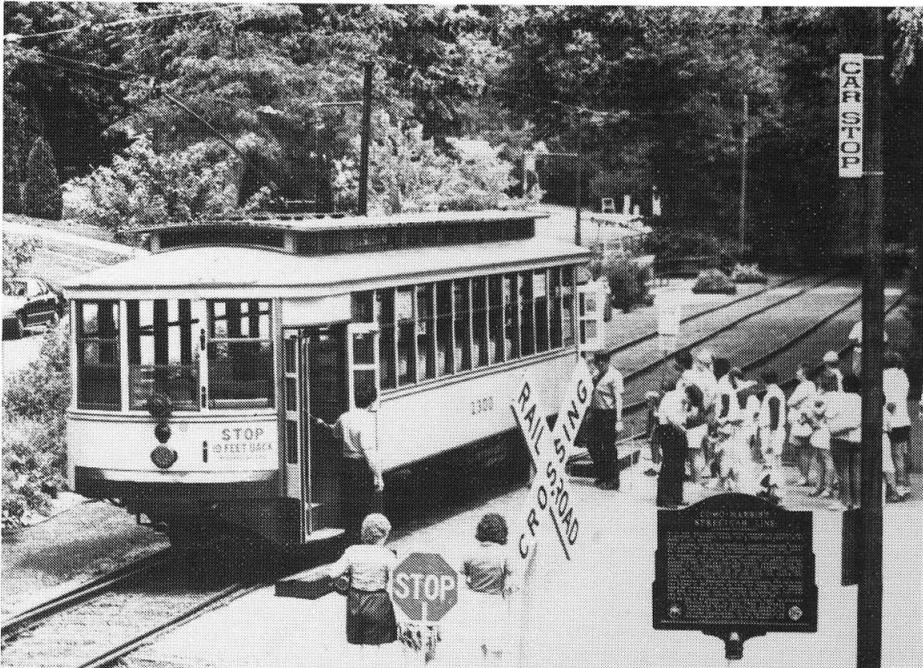
Hundreds opted for the streetcars. With the announcement in mind, MTM rolled out both cars, TCL 1300 and DSR 265, for all-day two-car service in anticipation of large crowds. Passengers were waiting to board the cars at both ends of the line when service began at 12:15 p.m., 15 minutes ahead of schedule.

Technically the cars operated with four-man crews instead of the usual three, the fourth crewman remaining on the ground at either end of the line. One extra member flagged the streetcars across 42nd Street, which although closed to automobiles had extremely heavy foot traffic crossing our line. The other extra crewman stood at Lake Calhoun platform to attract passengers unfamiliar with the area, sell tokens to save the conductors that chore, and thus speed turn-around time.

Early in the afternoon, each streetcar picked up five to ten passengers at Lake Calhoun. Nearly all asked for transfers to return later. As traffic increased, turns to the carbarns and motormen's speeches were abandoned in order to move the traffic as fast as possible. Trips soon were running nearly full in both directions.

Meanwhile at the bandstand, speeches, ribbon cutting and continuous music entertained onlookers under pleasant, partly cloudy skies. One event ended and people started to leave as a rain shower began. Hundreds grasping return trip transfers stormed up the slope to Lake Harriet Station to board the streetcars and dodge the rain drops. The crowd overflowed the platform and spilled down the grassy slope.

Seats on waiting car 1300 quickly filled, and many volunteered to stand to escape the rain. With the aisle packed and the usual conductor's head count impossible, over 90 passengers on that



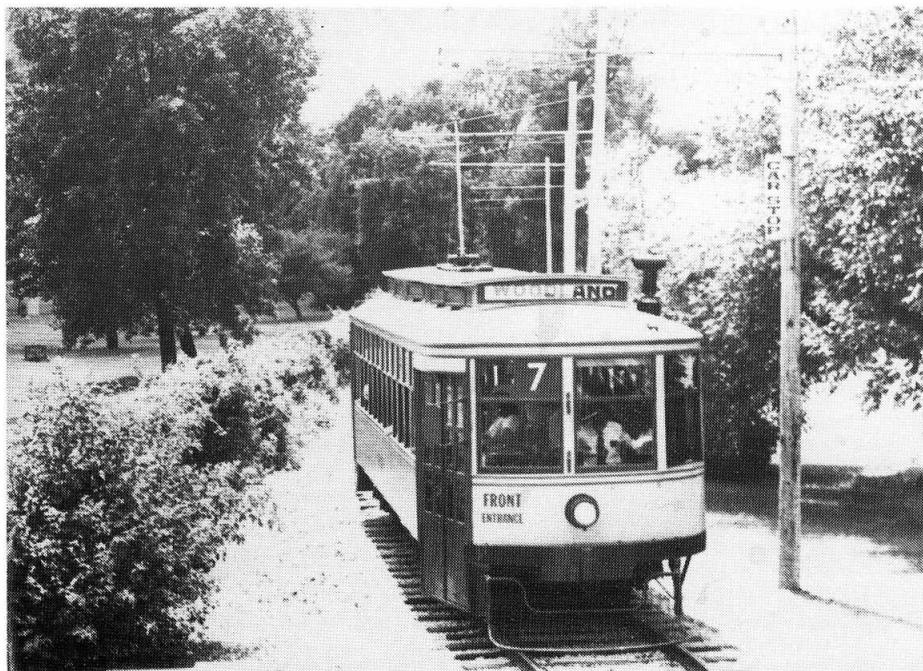
Car 1300 loads at 42nd Street heading into the passing track.

trip would not have been surprising. The carline performed flawlessly in this "emergency." Both cars cleared the platform within minutes in what may be the streetcar line's finest hour in recent years.

KSTP TV reporter **Pat Milan** and his cameraman taped interviews with several passengers at Lake Harriet Station for the evening news, asking where they were from and how they got to the new

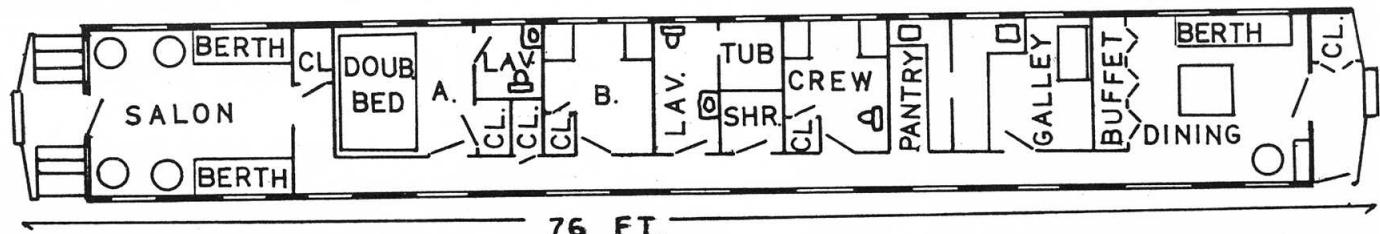
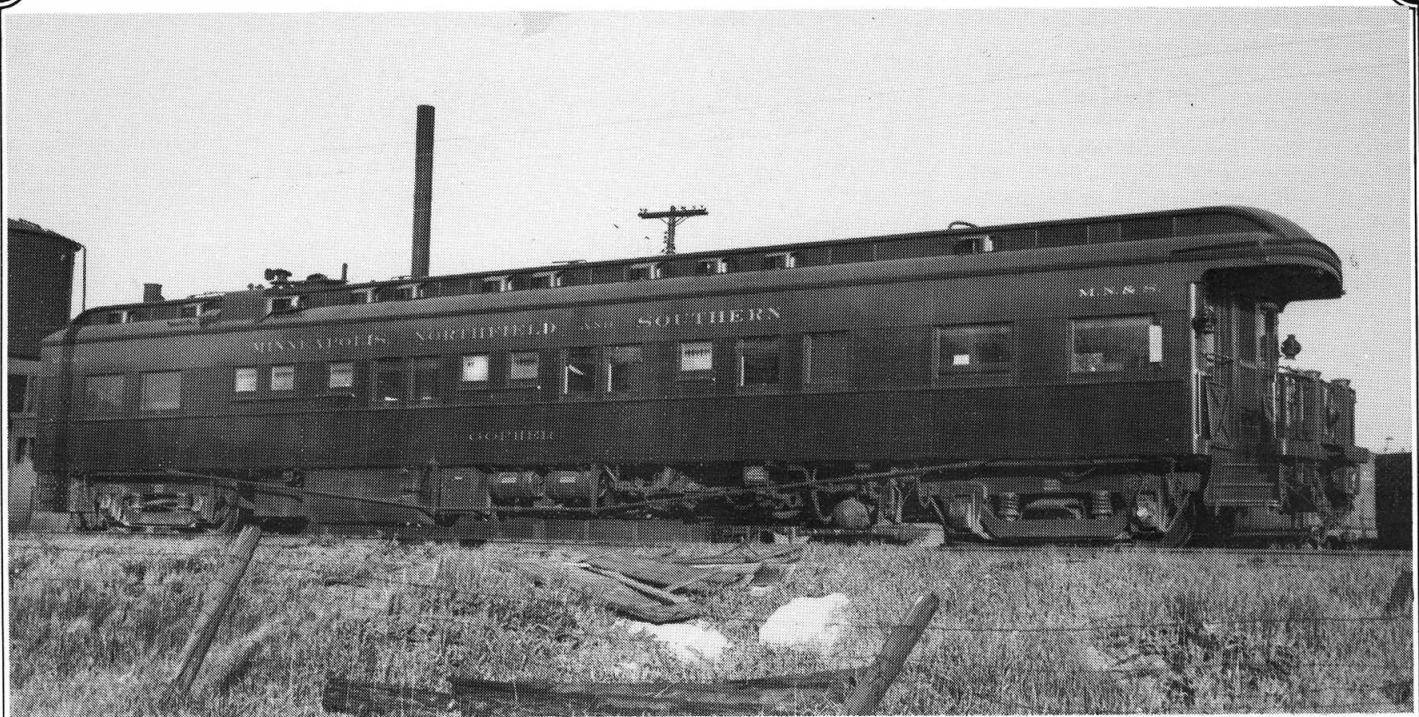
bandstand. He suggested in his report at 10 p.m. that concert-goers may indeed find the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line the best way to get to the lake. The closing scene showed our cars passing each other on the siding. People complemented MTM's operation all afternoon, still amazed to learn it is all-volunteer. Crews also found the day more than satisfying.

With the popularity of the new band-



Packed 265 slows for Lakewood stop at Lake Calhoun.

Aaron Isaacs Photos.



76 FT.

Museum office car "Grand Marais" shown when it was Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern's "Gopher." Photo possibly dates from 1930's or 1940's. Car's history is long and amazing. Patrick O McLaughlin Photo.

stand, more concerts and less parking, alternate transportation to concerts will become the norm. The streetcar line has been a source of pleasure, but it will function increasingly as a service to the concert-going public. June 29 proved that as a shuttle system from Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet, our system works!

TCT Reprinted

The Traction Division has re-issued sections of the pamphlet "**The Twin Cities To-Day**," first issued by Twin City Rapid Transit Company as a visitor guide in 1917. Maps, illustrations, text and a striking cover appear in four colors identical to the original copy. The pamphlet will be offered aboard the cars at Lake Harriet this summer for a \$2.50 donation, replacing the Big Island Park brochure as the major souvenir item. **Bill Campion**, who also directed reprinting of the new five-postcard pack, outdid himself with "Twin Cities To-Day." Thanks, Bill.

"Gopher" Whispers A Secret

The Minne Gazette of May/June, 1985, reported what was known about MTM's mysterious office car "Gopher" subsequent to its arrival on the Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern Railway in 1926. A year of frustrating inquiries into its earlier history turned up nothing. Then project manager **Tony Becker** quietly mentioned he had found an inscription while working on the car. No railroad company initial, no roster number, just the name "**Grand Marais**" stamped on the edge of the window sash as a car builder might have done. Thus the search heated up, yielding a thicket of interesting but vaguely relevant facts.

"Grand Marais" seemed to refer to small towns in northeastern Minnesota and Upper Michigan. County historical societies confirmed that **Alger, Smith & Company** had owned logging and railroad operations near both towns. Readers will recall that Leipold's biography

of **Win Stephens Sr** reports that he bought MTM's car from **Alger, Smith** in 1926, while the car was located at Green Bay, WI.

Willis A Raff of Grand Marais, MN, author of **PIONEERS IN THE WILDERNESS**, writes:

"The **Alger Smith Lumber Company** did operate in Cook County along the Pigeon River and in Canada, but sold all its assets in 1902 and moved operations to Duluth. They built a railroad network from Duluth toward the western border of Cook County, reaching Cascade Lake by World War I. The General Logging Company, a Weyerhaeuser interest, extended the primitive railway east and north to the Canadian border in 1926-27. The railroad in Cook County was never in a condition suitable for a palace car like the 'Gopher.' Moreover, despite many plans, no railroad ever was built into the village of Grand Marais, MN."

James Carter, publications editor with Northern Michigan University and a rail historian, reports that Alger Smith Lumber built and operated the **Manistique Railway**, a 79-mile logging road connecting Manistique on Lake Michigan, across the Upper Peninsula to Grand Marais on Lake Superior. Incorporated in 1886 and built during 1886-87, the Manistique had its headquarters and shops at (you guessed it) Grand Marais, MI.

Carter reports that the Manistique was taken up in 1910 from Grand Marais to Seney, MI, where it connected with the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic. Its rails and rolling stock were moved to Knife River, MN, where they were used to extend the **Duluth & Northern Minnesota Railroad**, another Alger Smith property.

The parent company was Alger, Smith & Company of Detroit. The principals were **M S Smith**, a Detroit banker who also served as president of the Duluth & Northern Minnesota. **Russell A Alger** rose to major general in the Civil War, drifted into politics as his business empire grew, and was elected Governor of Michigan from 1885-87. **President William McKinley** appointed him Secretary of War during the Spanish American War, and Michigan elected him to the US Senate from 1903 until his death in 1907.

Then the "smoking pistol" surfaced on page 71 of **Frank A King's** book **MINNESOTA LOGGING RAILROADS** published in 1981. There standing in shirt sleeves with his family is Duluth & Northern Minnesota General Manager **John Millen** on the platform of D&NM's business car "**Grand Marais**." The picture was taken in 1912 on **Henry Flagler's** overseas railroad to Key West, FL. King reports the "Grand Marais" came to the D&NM from the Manistique. The left rear windows and four-wheel trucks of the car in the picture closely match the photo of Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern business car "Gopher," whose windows are stamped "Grand Marais."

Nice going, Tony, but no cigar yet. Was the car built for a wealthy Detroit industrialist and high federal official, or did Alger buy it from someone else? It must date before 1900, but could it date from the 1880's? Was the builder really **Barney & Smith Car Company, Dayton, OH**, or did someone replace the original rear door with one bearing that label? Under the sheathing and layers of paint, does our car carry the heralds of the D&NM and the Manistique? Did the car originally have an open front plat-



Salon of Museum's "Grand Marais" office car in 1986. Bill Graham Photo.



form instead of the present closed steel one? Is the partial steel underframe original or part of the 1927 up-dating? Did cabinet officers sit in its salon discussing strategy for America's first great adventure in Asia? We still don't know.

The search now is for early photos, rosters or accounting records that describe the car, and biographical information on the people who probably ordered "Grand Marais" built. Stay tuned.

Stillwater Report

Lumberjack Days Draws Crowds

The annual Lumberjack Days celebration on July 19-20 drew 2,292 excursion riders to MTM's line, the highest total in the past three years. Gross revenue was about \$9,500. Eleven trips operated on the two days, all but one sold out. With no MTM power available, **Andersen Corporation** provided one of its diesels in exchange for three MTM coaches needed for its picnic special in Bayport on July 19. This left us with only 200 seats on Saturday, but one hundred more were available on Sunday when the second Rock Island coach was added to the consist. NP caboose 1631 was a great hit with the kids, serving as a kind of open air dome car.

The Andersen diesel, former Norfolk & Western NW2 switcher No 3110 of 600 horsepower, had its hands full climbing the hill out of Stillwater. Speed was not the main objective. A 12-mile round trip to Kimbro Lane took one hour and twenty minutes, about the right duration to qualify as a real train ride. The engine once shut down briefly due to a governor switch that had not been set, but it quickly was restarted.

Ross Hammond's public relations committee plastered Stillwater with posters, an effort that paid off hand-



Coach attendant Charlie McCarthy (dark glasses) helps with boarding at Lumberjack Days, Stillwater.



Lumberjack Days excursion train with caboose loads passengers, while GN A-11 with Andersen Picnic consist lays over at Stillwater, July 20, 1986.

somely. The Stillwater Chamber of Commerce included the operation in its publicity to further help draw crowds. **Bernie Braun's** crews turned out by **Doris Voligny** performed excellently. All who worked deserve praise for a job well done. In terms of smooth operations and attendance, this probably was MTM's best Lumberjack Days weekend since engine 328 appeared in 1981.

Track Work Continues

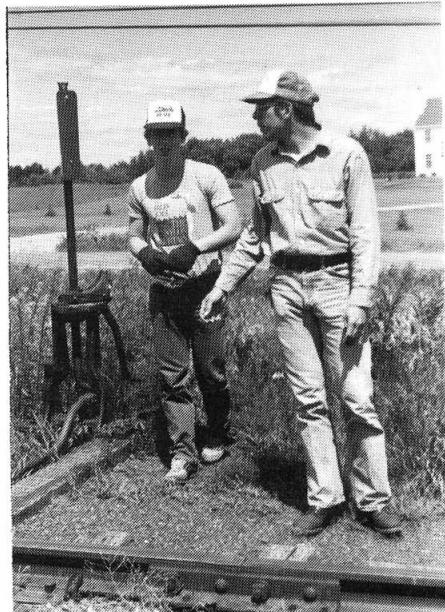
Orville Richter's track forces have raised and tamped nearly 1,000 feet of track along Highway 95, where underground springs saturate the roadbed. A short roller-coaster section in Brown's Creek gorge also has been raised and leveled. Gangs have been hauling additional rock ballast to these locations.

Thanks to member **Larry Schulte** for providing funds to buy ballast and hire a track tamping machine. The track held up well during Lumberjack Days.

Orville plans to straighten three sun kinks in the ribbon rail west of 88th Street. While not hazardous, the kinks slow the operation. Work then will concentrate on replacing bad ties under rail joints on the hill and as far west as Summit. The gangs begin work at Oak Glen Golf Course on Thursday evenings at 5 p.m. and continue til dusk. On Saturdays, work begins at Oak Glen at 9 a.m. Everyone is welcome. Strange as it may sound, track work is fun, especially with return of cooler weather.



Andersen switcher handles Lumberjack Days special, Stillwater, July 19, 1986.



Tom Dethmers and Ward Gilkerson confer at Summit Siding on MTM's Stillwater railroad.

Site Planning

There are no quick, simple or cheap ways to develop an exhibit at Stillwater. The railroad will consume many years and every penny it can earn and attract. Like the streetcar operation, the Stillwater railroad will grow in small increments, mainly through earned revenue. Initially it will depend on volunteers from all over the seven county region. Hopefully, though, more St Croix Valley residents will join the activity as it takes shape, just as occurred years ago at Lake Harriet.

Immediately, we need a maintenance of way building to store speeders and track equipment. Within two years, we need a larger building to store rolling stock on our site. These buildings will be costly, and we need to work with on line communities to locate and design them, as well as to raise funds to pay for them.

The time has come at Stillwater to haul away at our boot straps, and resist temptation to squander scarce resources on projects that are not immediately important. Besides keeping in shape, the railroad offers the chance for members to learn skills and have a hand in creating what will become a valuable exhibit.

Bill Graham
VP - Stillwater

**NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY
PARLOR AND OBSERVATION
CAR PERMIT 26**

FOR **Mrs. H. M. Curry** **1928**
Widow of General Mechanical
Superintendent (Retired) -

DURING CURRENT YEAR UNLESS OTHERWISE ORDERED
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS ON BACK
VALID WHEN COUNTERSIGNED BY A. M. GOTTSCHALD, L. R. FELLOWS OR E. W. COSTELLO

COUNTERSIGNED: *John* **Charles Donnelly**
PRESIDENT

FORM 3065

Northern Pacific Railway Company.
Mechanical Department.

TO LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEMEN:
THIS WILL BE YOUR AUTHORITY TO PERMIT

MR. E. B. Curry **TO RIDE ON**

YOUR ENGINE BETWEEN **All Stations** **ON** **All Divisions** **Division, if provided with**

PROPER TRANSPORTATION ACCOUNT

UNTIL **Dec. 31st 1928**

NO. 148 **148**
Mechanical Superintendent



Museum engine 328 hauls Andersen Corporation picnic special along St Croix River, Bayport, MN, in July, 1985.

1930
The Northern Pacific Railway Co.
Extends the courtesy of
Free Travel during 1930

To **Mrs. H. M. Curry** -
Widow of Gen. Mech. Supt. -
(Retired) *Charles Donnelly*

President

A 35

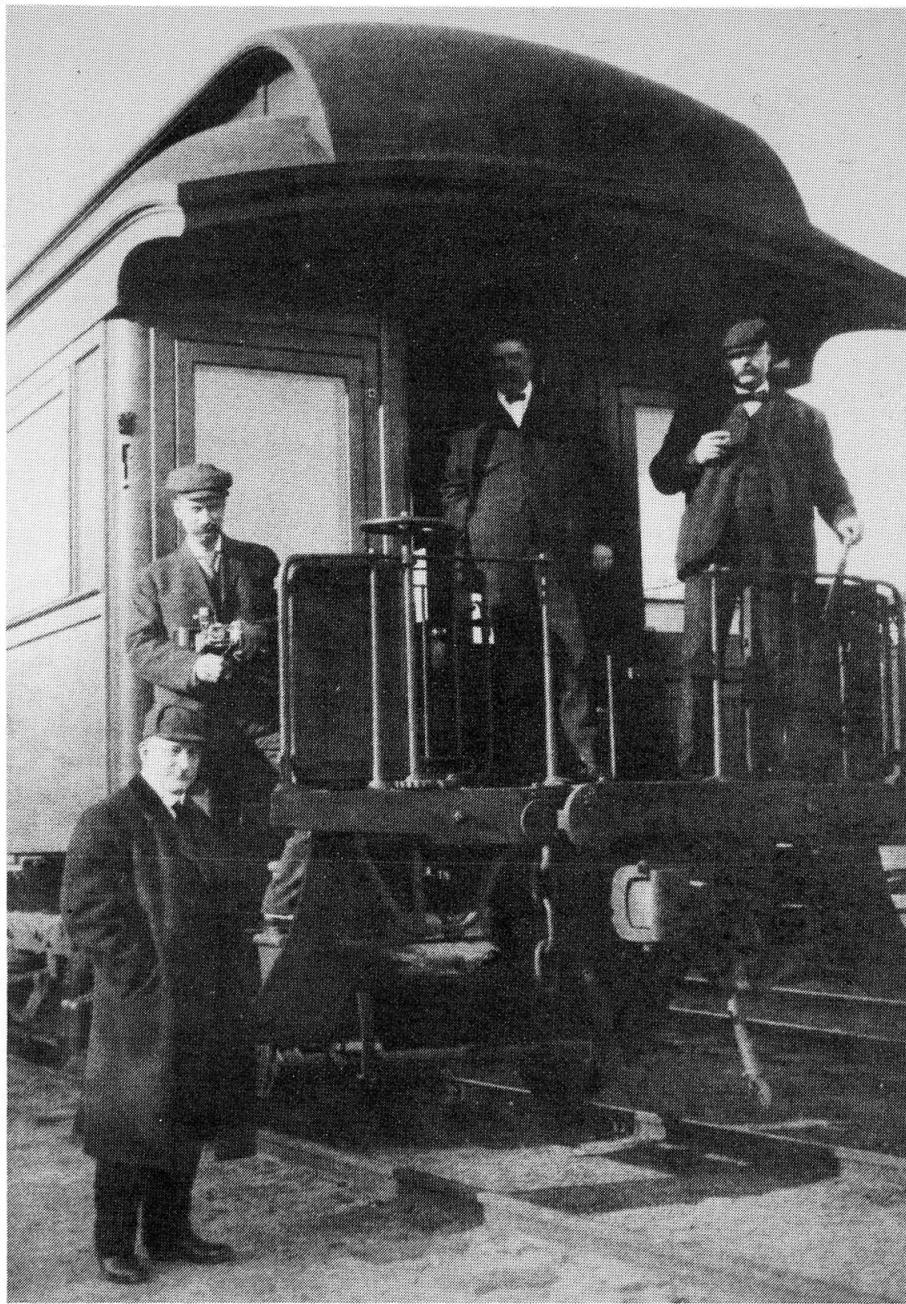
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY
1941
Pass **AA 33**

Mrs. H. M. Curry -
Widow of General Mechanical
Superintendent (Retired) -

VALID WHEN COUNTERSIGNED BY J. H. POORE OR R. H. DICK

John **Charles Curry**
PRESIDENT

Stats Courtesy of E B Curry.



Ben Curry Grew Up On The NP

Member **Ben Curry** writes about his youth as the son of Northern Pacific's Chief Mechanical Superintendent, **Howard M Curry**. Ben turns 90 years of age in August.

"I enclose a stat of my Engine Cab Pass issued by my father in 1918. I grew up with these in my pocket, and got to be a fair fireman back in the days before mechanical stokers.

Also enclosed are some stats of passes my mother used. The first two, series AA and A, to the best of my knowledge, are the only annual passes issued 'Good On The North Coast Limited, Trains 1 & 2.' The A series are personally signed by NP President **Charles Donnelly**. The AA series carry the signature of President **C E Denney**. Not many A series passes were issued. Denney came to the NP from the Erie, where he had been Signal Engineer, the only railroad president I know of with that background."

Thanks, Ben, and Happy Birthday!

Howard M Curry, Ben's father and Mechanical Superintendent of the Northern Pacific Railway, stands to right aboard Business Car No 10 in 1910.



Great Northern
1929 **Railway Company** 23814

PASS

Mrs. H. M. Curry---

ACCOUNT

Widow of deceased Gen'l. Mech.
Supt. Northern Pacific Ry.

COUNTERSIGNED BY

H. H. Parkhouse

UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 1929, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED
AND SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS ON BACK
VALID WHEN COUNTERSIGNED BY H. H. PARKHOUSE OR C. H. TREMBLY

VICE-PRESIDENT

H. M. Curry

E. F. Ach

DURING CURRENT YEAR UNLESS OTHERWISE ORDERED
AND SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS ON BACK
VALID WHEN COUNTERSIGNED BY J. W. COOPER, E. P. TAYLOR OR W. F. HEINTZ

COUNTERSIGNATURE

H. W. Winans
PRESIDENT

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy
Railroad **Burlington Route** **Company**

1931
PASS

Burlington Route

35354

- Mrs. H. M. Curry, -
Widow of Deceased Gen. Supt.,
Motive Power,
Nor. Pac. Ry.



Transfer station at Ironworld, USA, where visitors change from trolley to train.

Tourists Ride Iron Range Trains

Ironworld USA Opens

Over 14,000 attended Ironworld's grand opening June 29 for the International Polka Festival. The July 4 weekend boasted whopping attendance. The expanded museum now includes a cafeteria featuring ethnic foods from the Iron Range. New picnic grounds feature attractive landscaping and terracing complete with a man-made river, and the new amphitheater.

The railroad is where most visitors head first. The ex-Melbourne W-2 class streetcar, a bedraggled refugee in May, now is transformed inside and out. Layers of paint are gone from the Victorian interior built of tropical hardwoods, now in natural finish. From a distance, the maroon and yellow paint scheme with Ironworld logos bears a not too subtle resemblance to Duluth, Missabe

& Iron Range livery. The crew insists that Bucyrus-Erie cranes inspired the paint job.

Wherever it came from, the total effect is outstanding. Small wheels give the car rapid acceleration, and its drive gears cut in herring bone pattern make it exceedingly smooth and quiet. Crews still are learning the car's idiosyncrasies.

The railroad part of the exhibit began operation with the ex-Air Force 44-ton diesel, but the Porter 0-4-0 steamer was on deck for the July 4 weekend. Museum member **Zeke Fields** directed last minute preparation of the steam engine, and will be with Ironworld all summer.

The rebuilt ex-Missabe boxcars are an attractive and functional substitute for conventional coaches. They provide comfortable wooden benches, shelter from sun and rain and an excellent view



Will Graham liked refurbished interior of ex-Melbourne streetcar at Ironworld carhouse, July, 1986.



Ironworld train nears transfer station on track worthy of Conrail.



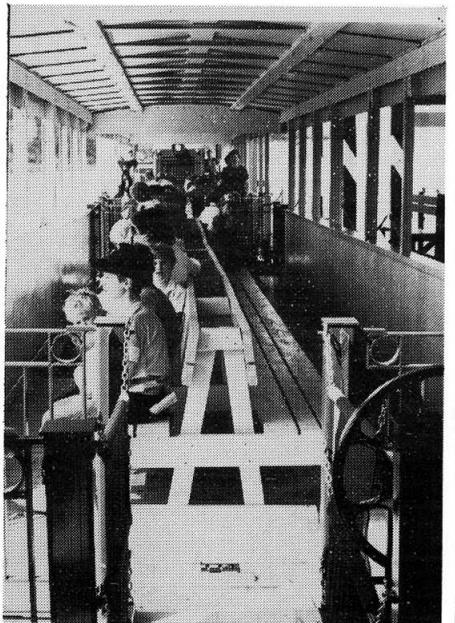
Seen from observation deck, Ironworld train waits for passengers at transfer station.

of the scenery. Ornate railings around the end of each car include a simple, safe and functional train corridor between cars. Both streetcar and train operate at 8-10 mph in the interests of safety and sight-seeing. The cross-platform transfer between train and streetcar is quick and efficient.

De-wirements have plagued the streetcar operation. On curves, the trolley wire hangs from long, curving hangers designed for trolley bus electrification, which cause the wire to kink at either end of the hanger. Wire pull-offs have not yet been provided on curves, and the wire is some distance off the track center through a number of spans.

A swiveling bus-type current collector has been installed on the car's trolley poles to overcome most of the problems. However, the collector has no idea how to cope with turn outs during facing point moves, causing the trolley pole to leap skyward and the lights to go out. The problems can be solved. Fortunately the car has a pole for either direction, and the lack of turn outs between the Museum and the transfer station does not impede revenue operations.

Ironworld has marvelous scenery, varied and excellent food, interesting exhibits and a tourist railway to match any. It is worth the visit.



Rebuilt ex-Missabe boxcars are a hit with Ironworld visitors. Semi-rigid bridging with railings permit passage between cars.

A Deep Experience At Soudan

The Soudan Mine State Park is the oldest iron mine on the Range, located 15 miles northeast of Virginia on US Highway 169 near Lake Vermillion. As a tourist attraction, it is one of the best kept secrets in the state. The barely finished Duluth & Iron Range Railroad hauled the first trainload of Minnesota ore containing 67 percent pure iron from Soudan to Two Harbors on July 31, 1884. The late **Frank A King** tells the story of Soudan in his 1972 book **THE MISSABE ROAD**.

The ore is so pure that it actually can be welded in the natural state, and so hard that tunnels require no timber shoring. A thin ore vein extends downward from the surface at a 78 degree angle in the direction of China. Mining began in open pits, but by the 1890's had gone so deep that the company resorted to underground operations. Good natural ventilation, solid rock formations and lack of water and mud gave Soudan a reputation among miners as a good place to work. These qualities make the mine an excellent tourist attraction today.

A main shaft was sunk from the surface along the angle of the vein. Two large elevator cars carried ore, miners and equipment up and down the shaft, from which horizontal tunnels were blasted at various levels into the ore vein. Each tunnel ascends at one percent away from the shaft, so that mine trains could use gravity to deliver their loads to the elevators.

By the end of mining in 1963, a tunnel network perhaps 50 miles long had been dug at 27 different levels, the deepest at 2,341 feet below the surface or 1,400 feet below sea level. The mine's rail network along with most of the equipment remains intact throughout the various levels, although only the bottom level is open to the public. A three dimensional map in the visitor center shows the ore vein and the tunnel network.

Upon closure, **United States Steel Corporation** donated the mine with 1,200 acres of land to the State of Minnesota. The **Department of Natural Resources** has operated it ever since as a state park.

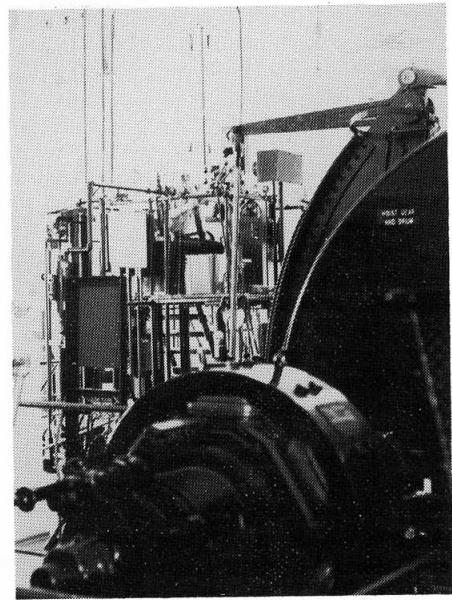
For a nominal charge, visitors are issued a hard hat and loaded onto the original elevators called "skips." The cars have three compartments arranged atop each other, and carry about three



Elevator tower and hoisting house greet visitors to Tower-Soudan State Park, Soudan, MN, where visitors may hike trails around Minnesota's oldest iron pits.

dozen visitors at a time. The compartments are dark, cold and crowded, just as they were when miners rode them. When loaded, the guide tugs the signal cord, and the hoisting operator sets the car in motion at 800 feet per minute all the way to the bottom of the shaft, a distance three times the height of the IDS Tower in Minneapolis.

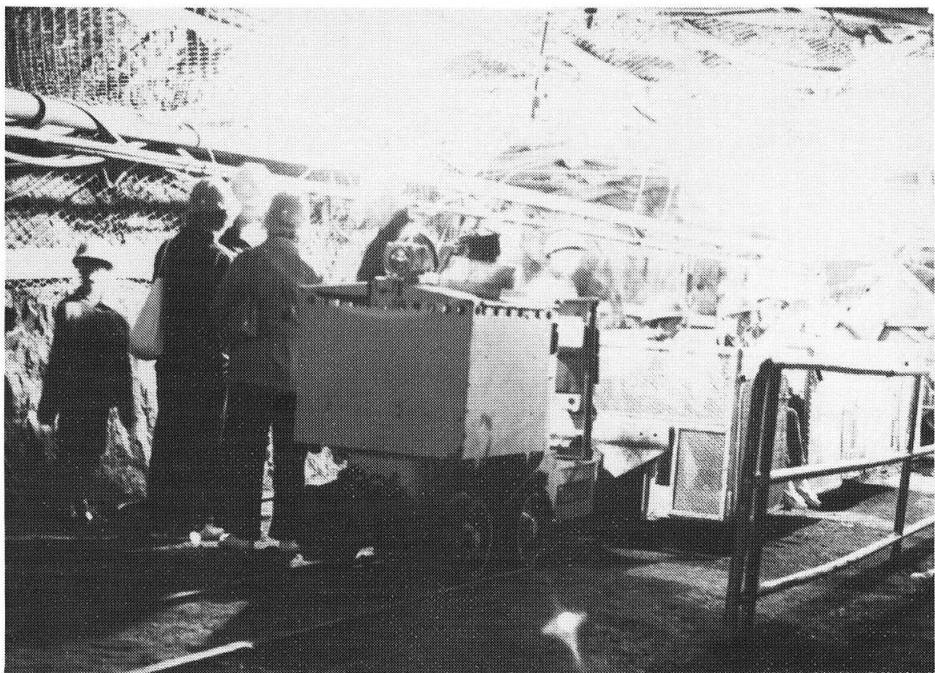
The "skip" rattles along the nearly vertical railway, as entrances to the mined-out levels flash past the window. The guides offer breezy reassurance to youngsters and the faint of heart during the three minute descent. Visitors step out into a brightly lighted room resembling an unfinished subway station, and board two small mine trains of two cars each. The cars have back to back benches and a mesh enclosure, and are pulled by tiny battery powered electric locomotives on narrow gauge track.



Hoisting operator's platform sits behind mammoth cable drum and DC motor at Soudan Mine State Park.



Soudan Mine visitors board mine train 2,341 feet underground.



Battery-powered electric mule whisks visitors along underground railway.

The trains travel leftward from the shaft about a half mile to the end of the line. They rock and rumble along the dimly lighted tunnel, snaking briskly around tight curves and passing several side tunnels and excavation sites. Temperature in the mine hangs at 52 degrees year round, refreshing for visitors wearing shorts and tee shirts.

Overhead trolley wires powered the trains when the mine was active, supplying 275 volts of direct current. Hung

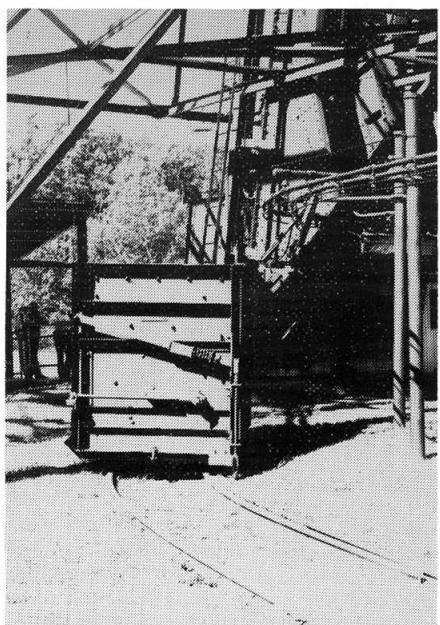
from the ceiling of the tunnel, the heads of locomotive operators skimmed along a few inches below the wire. A guide admitted that brushes with the wire straightened the hair of more than one trainman, although serious injuries were rare. Miners had to take extra care to keep machinery away from the wire. The DNR wisely converted the operation to battery power for public tours, leaving sections of de-energized trolley wire in place as part of the exhibit. The locomotives remain in the tunnel year

round, and run a full day on an overnight charge.

Retired miners guide the tours with thoroughly fascinating and informative accounts of the history, geology and the mining operations at Soudan. They field any and all questions in layman's language, and make visitors feel welcome. The mine tour takes a little over an hour, and is a field day for amateur geologists.

On the surface, visitors may walk through the hoisting station, a fully operational museum in itself dating from the early 1920's. Rotary converters provide D.C. electricity to mammoth Allis traction motors which turn the hoisting drum. The operator sits in an elevated enclosure surrounded by old-fashioned Johnson bars and guages. Upon a claxon signal from a tour guide far down in the mine, the operator eases the hoisting gear into motion. The fast rotating machinery with its deep, authoritative hum commands the visitor's full attention. Cable pays out from the drum through a hole in the roof to a tower at the elevator shaft on the far side of the visitor center.

Volunteers are working to restore two other parts of the operation. The "Larry car" received ore discharged from the skips and carried it to the tipple where it was dumped into standard gauge railroad jennies. The remotely controlled "Larry" ran continuously around a circular, narrow gauge track, powered from double overhead trolley wires. All



"Larry car" sits near elevator shaft where "skips" delivered ore from far down.

of it is still there, but needs total rebuilding.

Volunteers also have repaired the tipple building, replacing flooring and roof sections, and placing signs to explain how the operation worked. It is hoped in the future that standard gauge track and a few ore jennies can be placed below the tipple to complete the exhibit.

One guide reported that efforts are underway to rebuild the two-mile rail connection between Soudan and Tower. A Missabe 2-8-0 locomotive and a day coach have been displayed at Tower for some time. Recently two other passenger carrying antiques from the Missabe have been added to the display. The hope is to run the train again, no small dream, but harder things have been done.

Eight decades of mining at Soudan produced a total of "only" 15 million tons of ore. This compares to 18 million tons produced **each year** by the Minntac taconite mine at Mountain Iron. Soudan survived as long as it did on the high quality of its ore and its peculiar use in smelting operations of the time. The ore weighed 375 pounds per cubic foot, yielding considerable tonnage from a relatively small volume of product. This accounts for the miniature scale of equipment at Soudan.

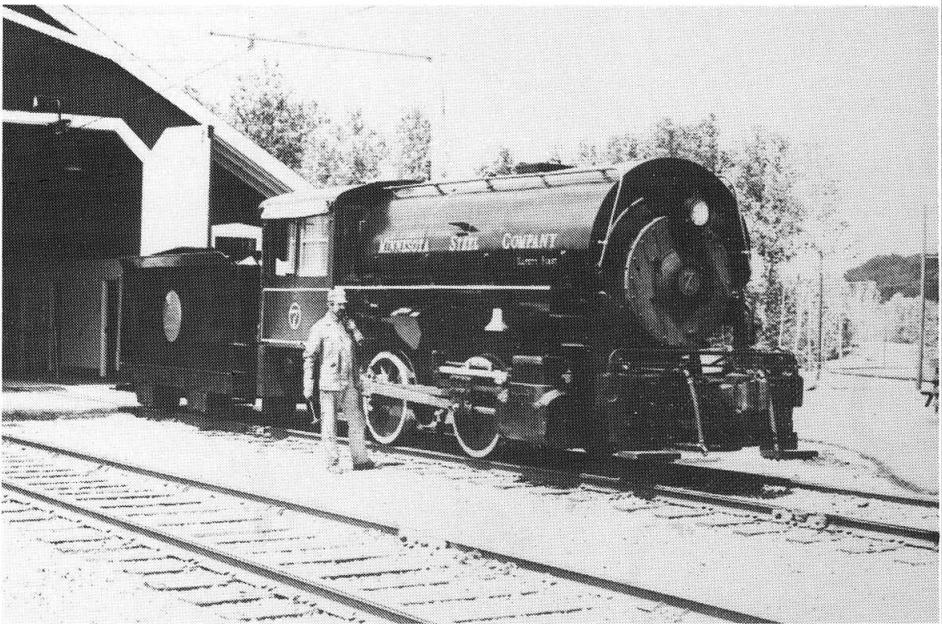
The guides are quick to point out that the Soudan iron is far from exhausted. The company paid taxes on its declared iron reserves, and many believe the known reserves were understated. Labor intensive extraction, cheap foreign ores and taconite technology doomed the Soudan mine as an economic competitor. With its antique equipment, tourists and missing railroad connection, Soudan looks like a curiosity. Yet the day may come again when American industry will need its iron. A guide remarked, "The rest of the ore down there isn't going anywhere."

What Came After The Bang?

Visitors to Soudan's bottom level wonder about the closed tunnel to the right of the "skip." The hardy souls in that restricted area are pondering a heavier question: whether physical matter decays and turns into energy. University of Minnesota physicists investigating the "Big Bang" theory of creation have set up a laboratory in Level 27, where they are waiting for some sample rock to disappear. They chose the spot because it is a great place to wonder about such things, and because it receives less solar radiation than any other location they could get



Air Force 44-tonner and Melbourne streetcar prepare for morning runs at Ironworld carhouse.



MTM'er Zeke Fields approaches Ironworld saddletanker, clutching his hammer. Engine originally was fueled from a coal scuttle in the cab. Tender was added for tourist service.

to on earth. Frightening as it is, a few solar particles actually do penetrate a half mile of solid rock.

Waiting for matter to decay is less exciting than a television game show, particularly in the dank bowels of the earth where days, nights, seasons and years are mostly irrelevant. One researcher hit upon blasting baroque organ music through the tunnel to ease the boredom. Along with an occasional bat, it was

quite a touch.

Tower Soudan State Park is open Memorial Day through Labor Day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The mine is a testament to early engineering and enterprise, and an awesome experience for the visitor. High operating costs and sometimes light attendance have raised the question whether the State can keep it open. Attendance can help protect this priceless exhibit for future generations against present day budget cutters.

Sauk Center Liked The Great Northern

- Michael W Schmitz

Growing up in Sauk Center, MN, there was only one railroad for me, the Great Northern. Sure, the Northern Pacific ran a ragtag branch through the north end of town (wish I had pictures of the old gas-electric doodlebug), but the real action was on the GN.

My mother was used to calls from the agents about my standing too close to the tracks when "my" trains went by. After all, I was only six! There was even a stick driven in the ground to designate the closest it was safe for me to go. I ignored it and survived. My favorite in those days, I called them my "familiar engines," were the Q Class 2-10-2's that came through every evening from the east. They had the worst sounding bells. During World War II with all brass going into the effort, the Q's had steel bells that said "dank" instead of "ding."

As a young kid, I began using my Kodak "Brownie" on the local action, spending many an enjoyable evening at the "roundhouse" where the 2-8-0 and the diesel were serviced for the next day's run up the "K" line to Cass Lake. The diesel and the steamer met each other about half way, the diesel hauling a mixed train to Bemidji. Sauk Center was the terminus for a branch of the Messabi Division, while the mainline of the Dakota Division passed through

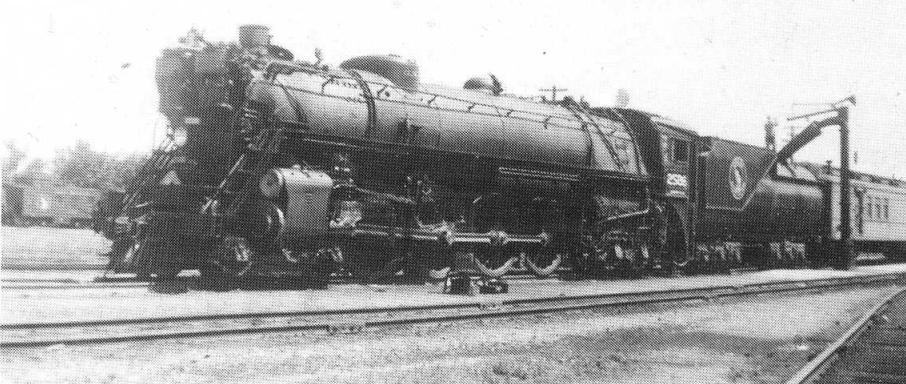
town. Back then, there were more trains in a day than there are now in a week.

The old depot is long gone. The last issue of the **Sauk Centre Herald** showed a front page picture of the "new" (1956) depot being cut in two, to be hauled away to make two garages.

On one of our frequent visits, my wife and I went to the site of the old engine house. We found some evidence of the pit, but only because I knew where to look. The siding and the elevator are still there. They were tearing up the last few feet of the "K" line and the last half

mile of the old NP branch which had been abandoned for about 20 years.

Today the tracks in the GN yard are down to only two. The Swift Company plant were reefers were iced has long since been razed. Not even a useable passing track is left. Thanks to MTM for keeping this man's dream alive in the Railroad Division.



Member Tony Becker was firing for engineer Frank O'Neal on Great Northern Train 27, the Fast Mail. S-2 Class Northern No 2586, pride of GN's heavy passenger fleet, was taking water at Wilmar, MN, August 8, 1943. Tony Becker Photo.



GN train hustles past elevators at Sauk Center, 1946.



Great Northern Pacific-type engine 1376 picks up the baggage car from the "K" line at Sauk Center, MN, 1946. Michael W Schmitz Photos.



Jerry Ross and son Mike revived Milwaukee Road Sisseton branch. Los Angeles Times photo.

Milwaukee Tracks Alive In South Dakota

- Bill Graham

Milbank Celebrates Dakota Rail

Rail service means more to farm towns who have faced the loss of it. On **August 7 - 9, Milbank, SD**, will hold its second annual "Trainfest" in the City Auditorium, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the Grant County Historical Society, and other organizations. The event will feature train rides each afternoon over the former Milwaukee Road Sisseton branchline, now owned and operated by **Dakota Rail, Inc.** The MTM Board of Directors have approved leasing three of the Museum's air-conditioned coaches to Dakota Rail for the event.

The small prairie communities of Mil-

bank and Sisseton have come a long way since 1980, when they faced total loss of rail service. The bankrupt Milwaukee Road, struggling to slim down and reorganize, had abandoned its Pacific Extension west of Terry, Montana, and planned a further cutback to Ortonville, MN. South Dakota faced losing its transcontinental connection, as well as much local service in northern and eastern areas of the State. Clearly it was time to fish or cut bait.

In 1981, the State Department of Transportation paid the Milwaukee Trustee \$18.7 million for 764 miles of lines forming a cross centered at Mitchell. A north-south line connected Aberdeen to Sioux City, and an east-west line connected Sioux Falls across the State to Rapid City. The 480 miles of former Tacoma mainline, stretching across the

northern tier of counties from Ortonville to Terry, continued temporarily as a Milwaukee Road operation. In 1982, the Trustee also sold the mainline to the State, which immediately contracted to sell it to Burlington Northern essentially under a contract for deed. The State also designated Burlington Northern to operate the rest of its new rail network.

Public action had saved the lines essential to the agricultural economy of South Dakota. Excluded, however, were the 134-mile branch to New England, ND, and the 38-mile branch from Milbank to Sisseton, SD. The former died quickly after briefly operating as an independent shortline. The Sisseton branch carried barley shipments from a large elevator and blending plant at Sisseton to brewers in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The communities were on their own to preserve their railroad.

It was a project for stout and desparate people. Like many of the Milwaukee's never-upgraded branchlines, most of the Sisseton's 56-pound rail dated from original 1893 construction. Modern hopper cars weighing perhaps three times the design standard had made the railroad nearly impassible and each trip an adventure. Abandoned hopper cars lay on their sides along the right of way at several locations, mute testimony to the Milwaukee's situation.

Jerry Ross, a Milwaukee Road engineer based in Montevideo, assembled a group of interested people from Milbank and Sisseton to study preservation of the branch. Corporations were formed, and local money raised to launch a shortline venture. Nerve-racking negotiations began with the Milwaukee, South Dakota and Burlington Northern. After several trips to Chicago, Ross told the Milwaukee negotiators he had a price in mind and a checkbook in his pocket, and that he was prepared to sit in their offices as long as it took for them to sell.

With the Milwaukee Road itself on the verge of liquidation, Jerry got his way. Milwaukee agreed to a price and favorable unit train grain rates to Twin Cities and Wisconsin destinations. They also agreed to interchange with Ross at

Milbank using trackage rights over their former mainline from Ortonville. The latter required agreements between the State and Burlington Northern who was to control that section of track. It all came together on June 4, 1982, when the first Dakota Rail train eased 41 hopper cars out of Milbank for Sisseton.

The line has done better than most expected in the years since, through hard work, sober management, and reinvestment of every loose penny in track improvements. Company forces have done most of the rehabilitation toward a goal of FRA Class 2 (25 mph) over the entire route. Thusfar, all 38 miles have been rehabilitated to support 10 mph speeds. In 1984, five million bushels were carried in about 2,500 hopper cars, with 160 annual round-trips. Lower volumes in 1985-86 reflect the poor farm economy, but Ross and his shippers cling to their optimism.

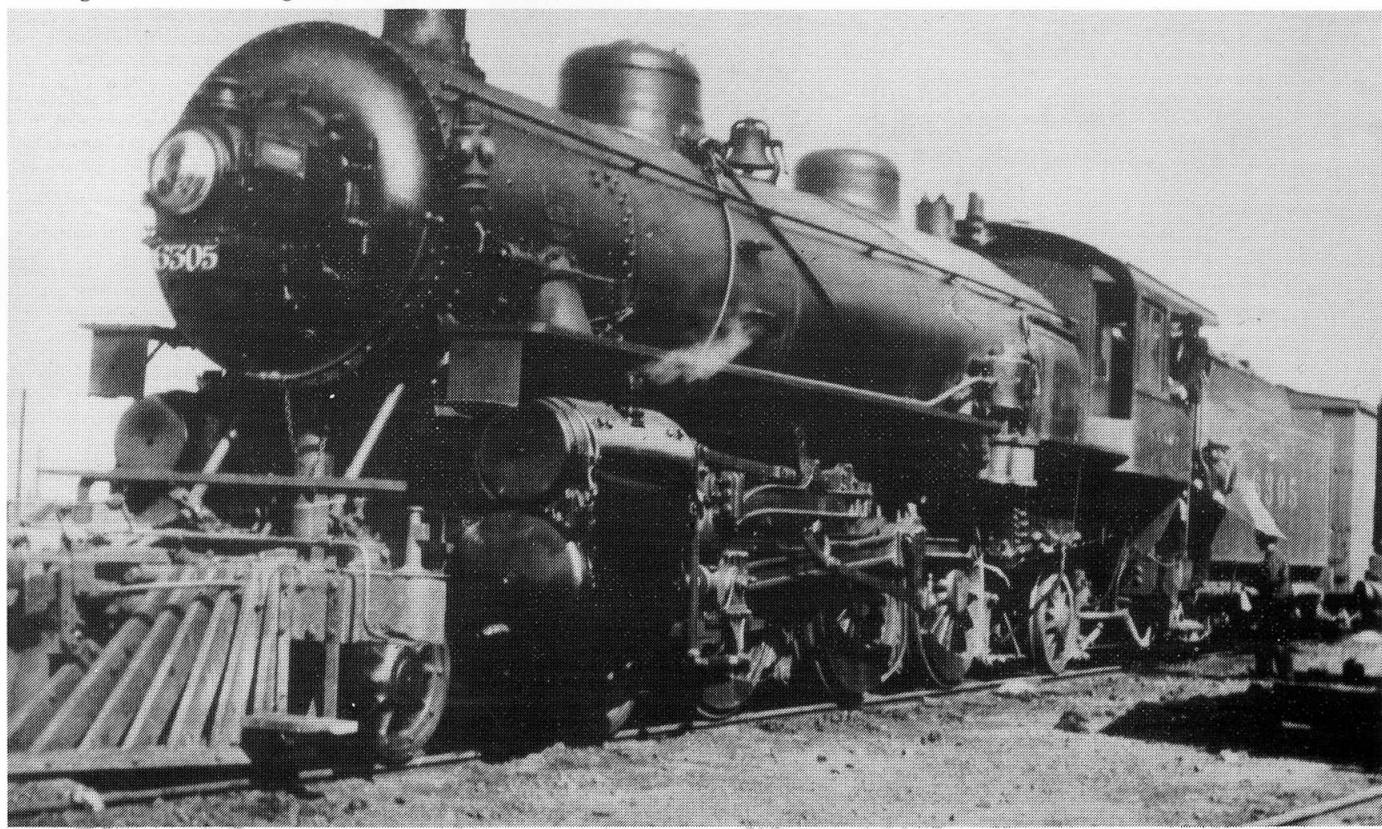
Lessons?

The taxpayers, in fact, have paid nothing since day one to support Dakota Rail, except for an Federal Railroad Administration-guaranteed loan of \$1 million which the company must repay. Dakota Rail has shown that private en-

terprise can revive a corpse of a railroad to the benefit of rural communities. Sisseton provides a strong, regular traffic base with enough distance to warrant rail service. At the same time, it is short enough to support track rehabilitation and maintenance from earnings. On line businesses and the communities recognized the need, and contracted for prepaid service. Finally, Jerry Ross brought effective management to the railroad with the long term goal to establish its viability.

Does the lesson apply to other endangered branchlines? Some, yes, although many long since have lost their economic reason to exist. In the current tax climate, shortline capital must come from local private sources. In the end, capital and revenues must support costs of operation and rehabilitation, and reflect the economic interests dependent on the service.

Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota provide legal methods for investing state and local government revenues in branch railroads. For some essential branchlines in advanced decay, mingling private and public money is the only way to infuse capital into branchlines that for decades have done without it.



Milwaukee Road apparently breaks in new F-3 Class engine on a freight around 1909. Pacifics handled heavy passenger trains like "Pioneer Limited" and "Olympion". Bill Graham collection.

What Might Have Been

Competitors recognized the value of the Milwaukee, as its Trustee tagged over half the railroad for the scrapper. Burlington Northern, for example, bought and rebuilt the Milwaukee route through the Cascades, abandoning its former Northern Pacific line over Stampede Pass. Nearer to home, the Milwaukee mainline from Minneapolis to Miles City, MT, was about 170 miles shorter than BN's Northern Pacific route through North Dakota. It is interesting to speculate how the chess game might have played otherwise.

In 1980, Milwaukee's Trustee needed to shed routes quickly, and BN wanted Milwaukee out of West. BN agreed to buy the Terry to Ortonville segment to deliver Montana coal to the Big Stone power plant. The States of Minnesota

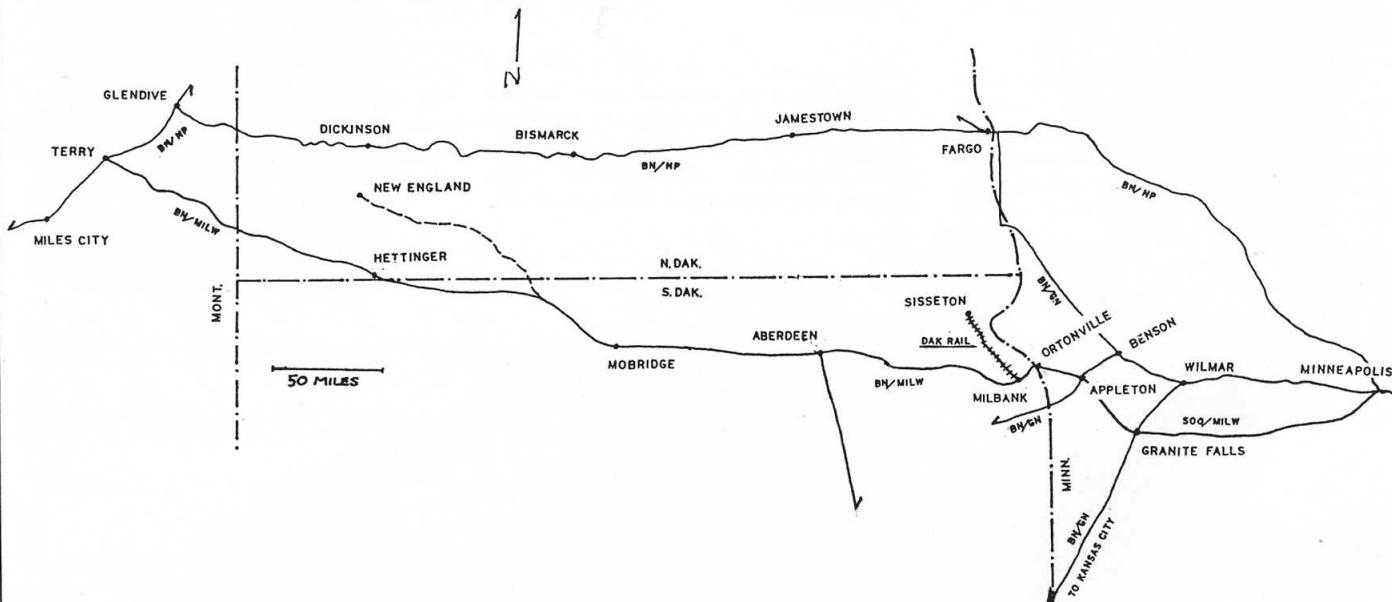
and South Dakota sighed in relief. The Trustee, however, kept the Minneapolis to Ortonville section to protect its haulage of Montana coal received from BN and destined for Wisconsin Power and Light Company. This prevented BN from taking full advantage of its new South Dakota route by joining it to its Minnesota lines. To do that, BN would have had to acquire additional Milwaukee trackage from Ortonville to Appleton or Granite Falls, MN.

That did not happen, and the Minneapolis to Ortonville segment showed up on the Trustee's map of retained routes dubbed the "core system." In 1985, the bankruptcy court awarded Soo Line the remains of the once great Milwaukee, including the Minneapolis to Ortonville segment.

In 1980, did BN see the Milwaukee mainline from Minneapolis or Granite

Falls to Miles City as its own shortcut for Montana coal, to the exclusion of competitors from southeastern Montana? If the Trustee had held onto the Miles City line til 1985, could he have collected more for the property from a buyer desiring to compete with BN for Montana coal? A new 90-mile railroad from Miles City is on the drawing board to tap coal reserves around Ashland, MT, by 1990. With flickering images of Soo Line or North Western units in Miles City, could the line indeed have saved the Milwaukee as an independent carrier? In 1986, is BN thinking about the short Minnesota connection it would need from the new Soo Line to capitalize on the Milwaukee's shorter distance?

One thing seems fairly sure: trains will continue to shake the old Olympian route across South Dakota, minus the grandeur of orange and maroon Super Domes and Touralux sleepers.



Branchline train punctuates wintry Dakota landscape. Mike Ross photo.

“Olympian Hiawatha” Served Milbank

- Neil Bagaus

(Author is a writer living in Milbank, SD. Article first appeared in **Milbank Trainfest Bulletin No 2**, 1986, Marie Halvorson, Editor.)

On Sunday, June 29, 1947, the “Olympian Hiawatha,” Trains 15 & 16, entered service. They were the Milwaukee Road’s entry into the highly competitive streamlined passenger business between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. During the Christmas holidays of 1952, the Milwaukee’s famous Super Dome cars were introduced on the Olympian. With new cars and fast speed, it was the Milwaukee’s showcase train. In the fall of 1957, Train 16 held the world’s record as the fastest passenger train, with a point to point record of 82.5 mph between Tomah and Portage, WI.

Milbank was not a scheduled stop for the Olympian Hiawatha when service began. Instead it was served by local Trains 5 & 6 and by the “Columbian”, Trains 17 & 18. By 1957, with elimination of these trains, the Olympian became the only passenger train on the Milwaukee between Minneapolis and Seattle.

Gradually business declined to the point that on May 22, 1961, the Olympian Hiawatha was discontinued between Deer Lodge, MT, and Seattle, although it retained its name. She was one of the first name trains in the US to fall victim to airplanes and cars.

Milbank now had passenger service to Chicago and Deer Lodge. Many passengers and railroaders remarked “Who wants to go to Deer Lodge?” The Milwaukee Road downgraded service to the point that on June 18, 1963, they were reprimanded by the Interstate Commerce Commission for providing poor service on Trains 15 & 16. Poor service meant fewer passengers on this train to nowhere, so on February 1, 1964, service was again cut back from Deer Lodge to Aberdeen, SD.

Passengers in Milbank now had the choice of going to Aberdeen or Chicago. Train 15 from Minneapolis arrived in Milbank at 11:13 p.m. Train 16 left for Minneapolis at 3:25 a.m. When the first Train 15 left Minneapolis for Aberdeen, the conductor was heard to yell, “All aboard the shuttle bus!” Even with the poor schedule, Trains 15 & 16 averaged 19,500 paying customers annually during their last years.



Dick Kasseth boards ex-NP caboose 1631 on Lumberjack Days special, Kimbro Lane, Stillwater.



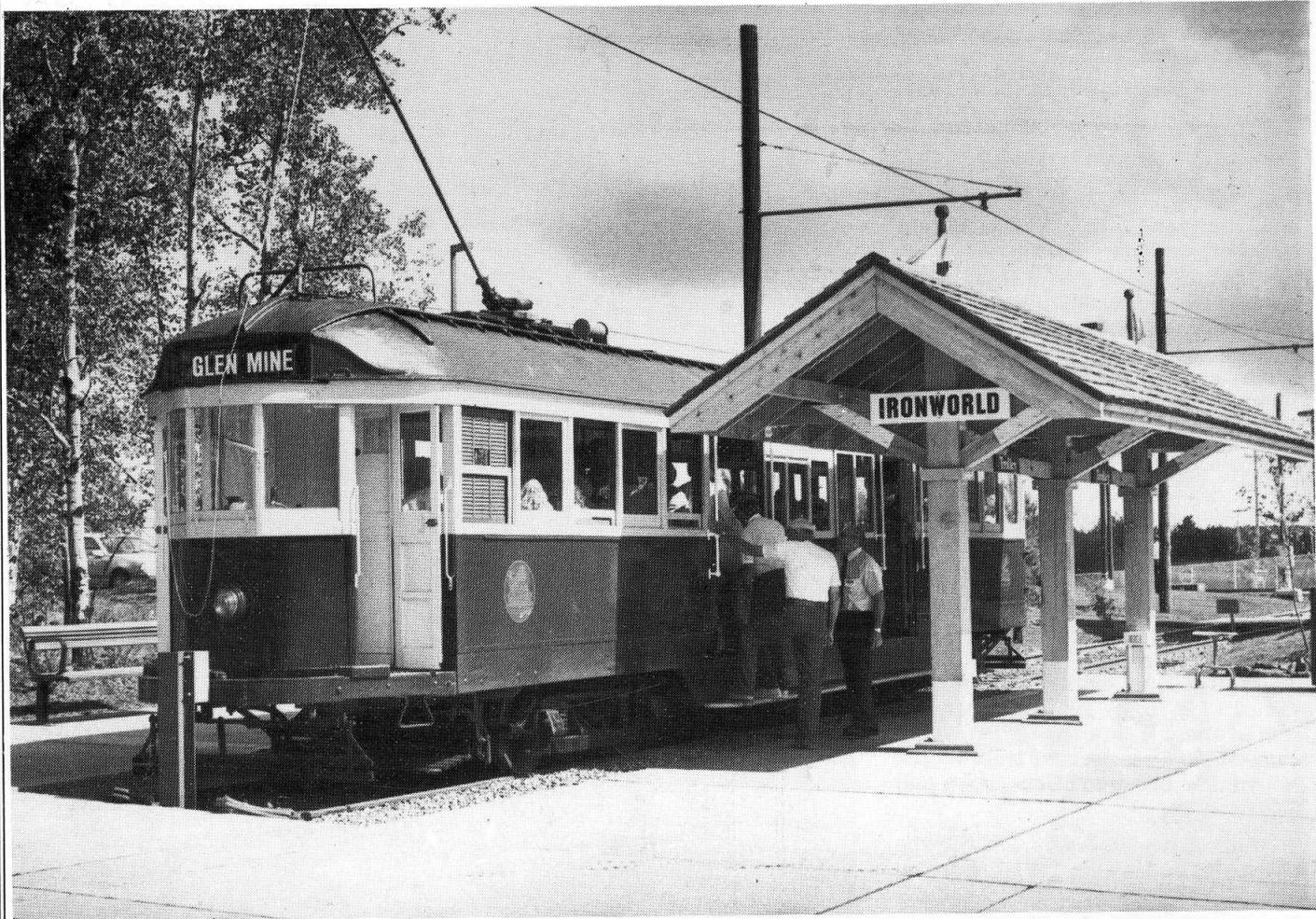
Minnesota Transfer diesel hauls MTM Stockyards Special through Long Lake Park, New Brighton, June 29, 1986. Bob Ball Photo

On October 4, 1968, the Post Office Department discontinued RPO mail on the trains. The ICC held hearings along the line and ruled the trains could be discontinued. On April 16, 1969, passenger service to Milbank ended with the last running of Train 15 to Aberdeen. When the final train arrived in Aberdeen at 3 a.m., a railroad worker was asked “What was it like?” He replied, “Quiet, like a funeral should be.”

About The Rear Cover

Ironworld and Lake Superior Museum helped this Aussie find a new lease on life. Near where Mesaba interurbans once ran, passengers board former Melbourne W-2 streetcar at Chisholm, MN, July 2, 1986. Bill Graham Photo.





MTM Membership Application

The all-volunteer nonprofit Minnesota Transportation Museum was formed in 1962 for the purpose of finding, restoring and operating vintage rail equipment for the education and the enjoyment of the public as a reminder of days gone by. If you like what you see in this magazine, how about becoming a member and helping us? It is a rich experience filled with fun and tradition. Join us today!

- MTM FAMILY Membership (\$25 per year.) All members over 18 eligible to operate museum equipment.
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- I do not wish to join MTM, but would like to contribute to the restoration (tax deductible).

Name _____ Phone _____

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City _____ State & Zip _____

Mail to: **Minnesota Transportation Museum, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1300, Hopkins, MN 55343



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
www.TrolleyRide.org

August 2021

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